CLAIMS

1. A method operative in a computer network for enabling entities to trade work schedules, comprising:

having a first entity post for display and trading a first work schedule, the first work schedule having associated therewith a second work schedule as defined by the first entity that the first entity is willing to accept in trade for the first work schedule; and

enabling a second entity to accept the first entity's first work schedule if a given condition is met.

2. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the given condition is that the second entity has a first work schedule that the first entity has indicated a willingness to accept in trade.

3. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the given condition is that the first and second entities are permitted to trade work schedules.

4. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the given condition is that a supervising entity has elected to approve a work schedule trade between the first and second entities.

5. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the given condition is that the first and second entities are members of a given workgroup.

6. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the given condition is that the first and second entities share a given

skill.

7. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the given condition is that a given work schedule being traded does not exceed a given number of time units per a given time period.

8. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the given condition is that the given work schedule being traded satisfies a given time constraint.

9. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the given condition is that a notice requirement for permitting a schedule trade to occur has been respected.

10. Apparatus for use in conjunction with a database of agent work schedule information, comprising:

a processor;

code executable by the processor for generating a display from which a supervising entity manages how a set of agents can trade work schedules; and

code executable by the processor and responsive to a selection in the display for enabling enforcement of at least one rule selected from a set of rules that allow work schedules to be traded: (a) if first approved by the supervising entity, (b) if agents are members of a given workgroup, (c) if agents have a given skill attribute, (d) if a given work schedule being traded does not exceed a given number of time units per a given time period; (e) if a given work schedule being traded satisfies a given time constraint; or (f) if a notice requirement for permitting a schedule trade to occur has been respected.

11. Apparatus for use in conjunction with a database of agent work schedule information, comprising:

a processor; and

code executable by the processor for generating a display from which an agent entity may view work schedules available for trade, at least one of the work schedules posted on the display having associated therewith an alternative work schedule that a posting entity is willing to accept in trade for the work schedule.

12. The apparatus as described in Claim **11** further including code executable by the processor and being responsive to a given selection for generating a display illustrating details of at least the work schedule or the associated work schedule.

13. The apparatus as described in Claim **11** further including code executable by the processor and being responsive to a given selection for generating a display from which a given entity can confirm a set of one or more work schedule trades.

14. Apparatus for use in conjunction with a database of agent work schedule information, comprising:

a processor;

code executable by the processor for generating a first display from which a supervising entity can define at least one policy by which a set of agents can trade work schedules;

code executable by the processor for generating a second display from which the supervising entity can select whether a given identifiable agent is permitted to trade a work schedule; and

code executable by the processor for generating a third display from which the supervising entity can approve or deny a given work schedule trade.

15. A method operative in a computer network for enabling participating entities to trade work schedules, comprising:

having a first entity post for display and trading a first work schedule;

having a second entity notify the first entity that the second entity desires to exchange a second work schedule for the first work schedule; and

enabling the first and second entities to exchange online the first and second work schedules;

wherein one or more steps are performed using one or more processing devices.

16. The method as described in claim **15** further including the step of determining whether the first work schedule satisfies a given criteria established by the second entity.

17. The method as described in claim **16** further including the step of notifying the second entity that the first entity has posted the first work schedule for display and trading.